NEW
NICK CARTER
WEEKLY

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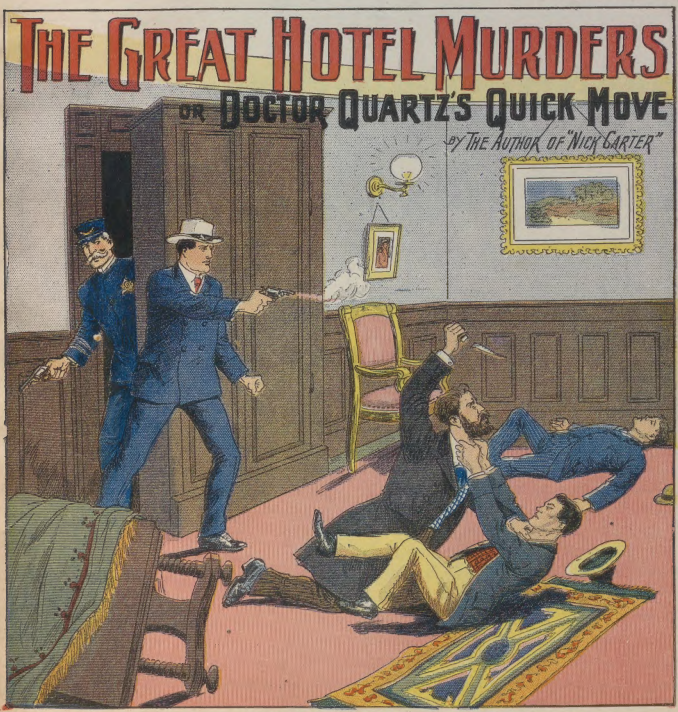
THE GREAT HOTEL MURDERS

OR DOCTOR QUARTZ'S QUICK MOVE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"



The knife in Dr. Quartz's hand was just descending as Nick and the chief leaped into the room, but a bullet from the detective's revolver snapped it off short at the hilt.

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The Great Hotel Murders;

OR,

DR. QUARTZ'S QUICK MOVE.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT OF INTENSE EXCITEMENT.

Dr. Quartz and the mysterious young woman known only as Zanoni were arrested on the night of the eighteenth of September, at the doctor's residence.

They were taken to the headquarters of police under the personal supervision of the chief himself, and were assigned to cells at opposite ends of the building; but while Zanoni was given a cell which more resembled a room in a hotel than an apartment in a prison, the famous—or, rather, the infamous—doctor was locked up in the most secure, and the strongest of the cells which the prison afforded.

The room in which Zanoni was confined, notwithstanding its appearance, was almost as secure as the cell of her preceptor, and there was never a thought in the minds of any of the officers connected with the department that there was or could be any possibility of escape for either of them.

In addition to the ordinary precautions aforesaid, for the security of the prisoners, a special watch was placed over the cell of the doctor, for he was accounted a most dangerous prisoner, and, moreover, Nick Carter, at the time of the arrest, and while he and his two assistants, Patsy and Ten-Ichi, remained at the doctor's house to investigate it, had especially warned the chief that Dr. Quartz would find some means to escape from their custody if official eyes were removed from espionage of him for even a moment.

The reader's attention is particularly called to the

foregoing statement as being one of three conditions which existed on the night following the arrest—that is, on the night of the nineteenth—which made up the sum total of a thrill of horror which pervaded the entire city when it awoke to life on the morning of the twentieth.

The second of these conditions was the discovery of the first of the murders at "The Great" hotel.

And now, a word as to this hotel before we proceed.

"The Great," as a hotel, lived a very short existence. It was created out of an entire block of buildings which had been used for business purposes in the city for a long time, and which an enterprising Eastern man by the name of Delevan, had purchased and turned into a modern hotel, filled with the latest improvements. At the time of the murders, it had been opened and running something less than a month, and it closed forever as a hotel within a week after the awful tragedies occurred. The hostelry owed its peculiar name to the incident that, when the proprietor in describing his project to one of his investors, had asked him what he thought of it, the man had replied:

"It is great!"

The third of these conditions, or incidents, which formed the nucleus for the history of that eventful night, was a riot which broke out in Delaware Avenue, not far from the main entrance of a museum owned and operated by Jeremy Stone, and which ended in the total sacking and utter demolition of that place, as well as in the deaths of three persons, one of whom was a police officer, and the serious injury of several others.

And now let us give our attention to the night of the nineteenth itself.

The chief of police remained at his post unusually late that night, for the especial reason that he desired to use the "Third Degree" of examination upon Dr. Quartz and the woman, Zanoni; but in his expectations over what he might discover from questioning them, he was miserably disappointed.

Dr. Quartz met every question which the chief propounded, in smiling, imperturbable and unbroken silence. Nothing which the chief could say elicited any sort of response from him, and it is on record that he spoke only once during the entire interview.

This happened at its close.

When the chief, in despair of drawing a reply from the doctor, at last arose from his seat at the desk and directed that the doctor be returned to his cell, the latter shrugged his shoulders, walked to the door of the private office, and then, turning in the grasp of the two policemen who held him, said:

"Chief, I must admit that I have been somewhat discourteous to-night, and to atone for it I will make you a promise: When next you capture me, I will agree to reply to every question you may ask."

He bowed and turned away again; but the chief called out to the officers to wait, and then demanded of the doctor what he meant by that remark. The doctor, however, appeared not to have heard him, and that closed the interview.

With Zanoni, his experience was totally different, though not one whit more satisfactory.

She was altogether too voluble.

Instead of waiting for him to ask questions, she volunteered information; and to every point of interest in her examination she gave four or five totally different versions, so that in the end the officer was as much in doubt as ever concerning the real facts he wished to elicit from her.

When her attention was called to the difference in her statements, she merely shrugged her shoulders and coolly informed the chief that he might accept version which pleased him most, and the interview with her ended by the chief determining that he would send her up for examination as to her sanity.

Altogether disappointed and thoroughly worn out, it was fifteen minutes before midnight when the chief closed his desk and shoved back his chair, preparatory to going home. At precisely twelve o'clock he left the office.

Now, the chief was one of those suburban-loving individuals, who delight to have their homes as far as possible from the center of things, and so it was that he lived some distance out of the city proper.

True, he had telephonic connections with his office

s well as with all parts of the city, but it was his habit) travel to and from his house on horseback, no matter /hat the hour, and notwithstanding the condition of ıe weather.

This fact created an interval, which might be called hiatus, in the official life of the city, of three-quarters f an hour, twice a day, during which the chief of po-ce was severed from communication with his depart-ıent. That is to say, it took him just exactly that ength of time to travel between his office and his house, rovided he made ordinary time with his horse; but , as often. happened, he loitered by the way to talk ith a friend, or for any other purpose, the time was ngthened according as he was delayed.

It was just on the stroke of midnight when he aulted into the saddle at the door of police headquar-ers, and therefore it will be seen that if he were not ıtercepted, three-quarters of an hour must elapse be-ore he could reach home, and if he should then start ack again without dismounting, and at headlong peed, another half hour of absence might approxi-ıately be counted upon.

All of these facts, small in themselves, but mighty in ıeir effect upon the incidents of the night, had, as will resently be seen, a direct bearing upon what followed.

The chief started away on a canter and had been one from the door just seven minutes, when the tele-hone at headquarters rang, and the officer who had ken his place as temporary chief of the department informed by the captain of the precinct in which he Great hotel was located, that a murder had been ommitted at the hotel, that he had sent one of his ergeants with six men around there, that he was on ıe point of following himself, at once, and that he ould communicate later from the hotel.

The officer at headquarters hung up the receiver, re-ghted his cigar, and leaned back in his chair undis-ırbed, satisfied to leave things as they were until e heard further particulars from the captain who had ıe matter in charge.

Three minutes later, however—that is, at twelve-ten, ccording to the telephone blotter, he was compelled) answer the telephone again.

This time the message was from the hotel—that is to say, it was so announced from the other end of the wire, although no person could ever be found who sent the message; and the announcement which came over the line was this:

"Hello! Is that police headquarters?" And when assured that it was, continued: "This is The Great hotel. I am one of the clerks. For God's sake, send around two or three of your best men. Three murders have been committed here within an hour, and I don't know how many more——"

"But," interposed the headquarters official, "I have just received a message from the captain of the —th that there was only one murder, and——"

"Yes; I know," interrupted the voice. "There was only one when that message was sent. There have been two more since then."

The man at the other end of the wire hung up the receiver; and the officer in charge at headquarters, startled at the news he had received, as well he might be, called in two of the best men from the detective bureau, told them of the circumstances, and ordered them to take two more men with them and to go at once to the hotel. The official time when they left the office to execute this order was twelve-seventeen.

At twelve-twenty-three the headquarters telephone again rang sharply, and the officer picked up the receiver with the mental remark that it was about time he heard more from the captain who had first reported.

But the message which came over the phone was of a totally different character. It was from another precinct, situated in an entirely different part of the city—in a word, it came from the Delaware Avenue district.

The message, deprived of its necessary questions and answers, and reduced to the mere statement of fact it contained, was as follows:

"A riot has broken out in Delaware Avenue, in front of Stone's Museum. We will need all the reserves that can be spared from every part of the city. The rioters are breaking windows, battering down the doors of the museum, firing pistols and guns, and have beaten my own men back. It is supposed to have started from an ordinary street fight, but I know no facts as yet."

This, and much more; but such is the nucleus of the information received at headquarters by the message at twelve-twenty-three.

The officer in command at headquarters realized the gravity of this demand, and at once applied himself to the exigency of the case, and within ten minutes from the time the message came in, patrol wagons at the various stations throughout the city were filling with reserves to be hurried to the scene of the riot.

For the moment, the murders at The Great hotel were totally forgotten.

He called into his own office the captain temporarily in command of the detective bureau and asked him how many men he could spare, and in a few moments more six additional men from that department were sent to the scene of the riot on detective work, which is exceedingly important as working in conjunction with the regular uniformed officers at such a time.

Having attended to everything which could be done from his official chair, he opened his watch, and noticing that it still lacked several minutes to twelve-forty-five—the time when the chief was expected to arrive at his home—he waited till that time, and then called up the house.

He was told in a word that the chief was not yet there.

"Very well," he said to the person who answered him; "he will doubtless be there in a few minutes. Tell him that three murders have been reported from The Great hotel, and that I have sent four of our best men there; also that a riot has broken out in front of Stone's Museum, and that I have called out the reserves to quell it; also that I have sent my six available additional men from this office as well as our own reserves. I think it my duty to go there myself, and will leave the office in charge of Sergt. Green."

With that, considering his duty done, he hung up the receiver, called Green to the desk, donned his official coat and cap, seized his night stick, and buckled a pair of guns around him, and went out.

Sergt. Green reported his departure on the blotter at twelve-fifty.

Now, during all this excitement—and the reader will realize that it was intense, even at so prosaic place as police headquarters—between seven minu past twelve and ten minutes of one o'clock not thought had been given to Dr. Quartz; Sergt. Gre who assumed charge of the desk at twelve-fifty, a who came on actual duty after an absence of eighte hours from service, had not so much as heard of capture; he certainly did not know that the doctor w a prisoner below.

Ordinarily, he would have looked over the blot to see what had taken place, but to-night there we so many other things to occupy his attention that t simple duty did not occur to him.

Nevertheless, if his blotter had been correct regai ing the events of the night, it would have stated t at 1:10 A. M., Dr. Quartz and Zanoni calmly wal away from police headquarters, arm in arm.

CHAPTER II.

THE MURDER IN THE BRIDAL CHAMBER.

The first knowledge which Nick Carter had of events of the night, which had succeeded one anot so rapidly, was shortly after three o'clock in the mo ing, when he was awakened by a summons at his do and, on opening it, discovered a policeman in unifo awaiting him.

"The chief's compliments to you, Mr. Carter," s he, "and would you be so kind as to go with me to T Great hotel immegeetly, sir? Sure, sir, he had no ti to write a letter, but he said you would come if I t you it was about a murder."

"Is that all!" said Nick, laughing, and not intendi the remark as a question at all. But there was, nev theless, an answer, for the policeman replied:

"No, sir. It is not all. There has been a riot do at Stone's Museum, but I don't think the chief wo have called you up on that account, sir. There h been the divil and all happenin' this night, with hea broken an'——"

"Where was the riot, did you say?" interrupted Nic

"At Stone's Museum, sir. In Delaware Avenoo."

"All right. I'll be ready in a moment."

There is a hack at the dure, sir."

hirty minutes later Nick Carter entered the main r of the hotel and found the chief awaiting him just oss the threshold.

I'm awfully sorry to have disturbed you, Carter," the chief, "but this appears to be a case of some rest and I thought you would like to have a hand t."

That's all right," replied Nick. "I'm always glad serve you, as you know."

Thank you, Carter. That is very good of you."

Who has been killed, chief?"

A woman."

H'm! A guest of the house or one of the serv- ?"

Neither; that's the odd part of it."

Eh? How is it the odd part of it?"

You'll see, presently, when you have looked the nd over a bit. I wish you wouldn't ask questions t it until you have done so. It strikes me as a mysterious affair."

Most murders are apt to be so. A woman, eh? ng and beautiful, I suppose. That seems to be the of murders, these days."

It was certainly the rule in this case," replied the f, moodily.

Where is the body?" asked Nick, abruptly.

Upstairs, in the bridal chamber," was the reply.

Nick was in the act of starting forward, but he ted suddenly and turned.

I thought you said she was not a guest of the se," he said.

I did say so."

Nor a servant."

I said that, too."

Then how did she get into the bridal chamber? s she occupying it?"

It certainly appears so."

How did she get there if she was not a guest of house?"

That is a question which nobody seems able to an- er, Nick."

Humph! It sounds like Quartz, doesn't it?"

"Decidedly."

Nick wheeled upon him again.

"Has Quartz escaped?" he demanded, sharply.

"Certainly not," replied the chief.

Nick breathed a sigh of relief.

"What time did the murder take place?" he asked.

"The body was discovered a few minutes before midnight. I left my office at exactly twelve, and the report of the murder came in shortly after I left."

"What time is it now?"

The chief looked at his watch and replied:

"Twenty minutes of four."

"Where is this bridal chamber?"

"On the next floor. Come; I will take you there."

As they were ascending the stairs, Nick casually remarked:

"The officer you sent after me tells me that there has been a riot to-night."

"Yes; there has," replied the chief.

"At Jeremy Stone's museum."

"Yes; but it is all over now."

"Anything happen to Jeremy's stock?" asked Nick, with a smile, confidently expecting a negative reply.

"The building was totally wrecked inside. Jerry has not a thing left to show for yesterday," replied the chief.

Nick Carter stopped as suddenly as if a wall confronted him.

"Do you mean to say that the riot was against Stone's place, and stock, and not a mere street fight?" he asked.

"Oh, no. I did not mean to say that. Jerry's place was destroyed incidentally to the riot. It began in a fight with one of his employees in front of the door. The man ran into the building, and was followed there."

"And yet, they wrecked the place?"

"Completely."

"What time did the riot occur?"

"Why, shortly after midnight. I don't know the exact time, for I have not been to my office yet for the official report; but as nearly as I can figure, about half-past twelve."

"Chief, do you happen to see anything significant in the happening of these two events?"

"You mean the murder and the riot?"

"I do."

"No; I can't say that I do."

They had continued on their way up the stairs, and now approached the front end of a wide corridor, where there was a door in front of which two officers were stationed, while on a sofa near them two gentlemen were seated.

"That is the room, I suppose," said Nick.

"Yes."

"Is anybody inside it now?"

"No; and nothing has been disturbed. I even persuaded the coroner to await your arrival, so that you might view the body together."

"Good! Who is that with him?"

"The regular hotel physician. I don't remember his name. He asked the coroner to permit him to be present at the examination."

"All right," said Nick. "We'll see about that later. And now, chief, before you introduce me to the coroner, I want you to agree to do me a favor."

"Anything in the world, Carter."

"As soon as you have presented me to the coroner, and while I am talking with him, I wish you would go to the telephone, call up your own office, and ask after the health of Dr. Quartz."

"What the dev——"

"I'm not joking, chief. Find out for me how he is feeling, that 's all, only see that you get the state of his health from his own lips. It won't take you long, and if you wish, we won't go into the room where the body is until you return."

The chief was now plainly anxious.

He consumed only a moment in making the necessary introduction, and then darted down the stairs again.

"The chief would like to enter the room with us, coroner," said Nick, "so if you have no objections we will wait a moment more. He will return in a minute. May I ask who is this gentleman with you?"

"Oh, yes. Pray excuse me. This is the regular resident hotel physician, Dr. Crystal. Doctor, let me introduce you to Mr. Carter."

Dr. Crystal bowed profoundly, but without extending his hand, and also without altering a line of the expression of his countenance. He uttered just t words, and they were:

"So glad."

Nick looked at him keenly, and noticed that he w an exceptionally handsome man, not apparently mo than thirty, and with a face as expressionless as marb Even his eyes, as he cast one swift glance upon Nic when they were introduced, seemed as expressionle as his countenance, and the detective felt at once instinctive dislike for him.

"Have you viewed the body at all, coroner?" asl Nick.

"I merely stepped into the room with the chief, wh I first came," replied the coroner; "but at his requ I was glad to leave my official viewing of the af until you could assist me."

"That was very kind of you. Ah! The chief is turning, I see."

The chief made no remark when he approac them, but, taking Nick by the arm, drew him aside, of the hearing of the others.

"Quartz has escaped—and the woman, Zanoni, so," he whispered. "What do you think of that?"

"I think," replied Nick, slowly, "that the best thi we can do for the present is to investigate the bri chamber."

"Do you mean to say that you suspected that he h escaped when you asked me to go to the telephone

"Yes, I do; but only because of the coincidences things. I only guessed it, we will say, but it was so like that other Dr. Quartz whom I once knew."

"Damn the Dr. Quartz whom you once knew, C ter! He crops up in every conversation we have."

"With all my heart, chief; only that does not capture the one whom we now know. And now, ch the coroner is becoming impatient. Are you ready enter the bridal chamber?"

"Yes. Come on, gentlemen, if you are all ready."

He signaled to the officers at the door, who stepp

e le, and then the door was opened and Nick Carter pped back while he motioned for his companions to ncede him into the room.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOOR TO THE ROOM BEYOND.

The room which the four men entered was located in œ southwest corner of the building, and was not unbe general apartments of the same character in other otels, save that it was even more gorgeously apcinted.

The bed was a huge, canopied affair, and was unached, save that the woman's wraps, and the hat she d worn, had been throw there, to all appearances elessly, and with no thought on their owner's part t she would never again have use for them.

The body of the murdered woman was seated in a nfortable chair near one of the windows, but was, ever, concealed from chance observation from the side by the closely drawn curtains of lace.

A small bullet hole, exactly in the middle of her ehead, and a revolver with three chambers empty, ng on a table near a window at the opposite side of e room and fully twenty feet away from the body, d only too plainly the cause of her death.

It seemed evident at a glance that some person had mly aimed the weapon at her while she was perps totally unconscious of the act—perhaps while e was napping—and with unerring and deadly dictness, had murdered her.

She was perhaps twenty years of age—certainly not ore than that. Her dress was a wedding gown of the est pattern, the most approved style, and the costst materials.

A bright, new wedding ring showed on the third ger of her left hand, but the engagement ring which d preceded it, and which doubtless had contained a ecious stone, was missing, although the finger plainly owed the mark where one had been worn.

This condition was duplicated at her throat, for there re marks upon her neck which indicated that a rope cklace had once been there, and that also a jeweled collar had been removed from its place at her throat since her death.

On the floor beside her, scattered there as if in careless haste, were the teeth and a part of the back of a comb, such as might once have been profuse with jewels and worn in the hair.

Also on the floor, near her, where it had doubtless been thrown by her murderer, after it had been torn from the chain which once suspended it to her girdle, was an empty purse, and from that purse, when Nick Carter raised it to his nostrils, ascended the unmistakable odor which emanates from paper money.

The purse had evidently been well filled, and it was itself of considerable value, although this fact had doubtless not been considered by the murderer in the light of the spoils within it.

She had beautiful, wavy, brown hair, a rather high, wide forehead, dark, red-brown eyes, an unusually fair complexion, Grecian features of perfect regularity, delicate, well-molded lips, with an unmistakable Cupid's-bow which showed plainly even in death, small, perfectly formed hands and feet, the latter shod in satin slippers, and the former perfectly manicured; and her hands rested easily upon her lap, as if death had come so suddenly that she had not even moved them when it struck, while her feet rested with light, graceful ease upon a hassock.

And there was nothing else.

Save for the fact that she was there; that her wraps and hat were on the bed; that the wreck of the comb and her purse were on the floor; and that the fatal pistol was lying upon the table across the room, there was nothing to indicate that the room had been occupied, or even that she had moved around it.

Nick Carter had taken in the details already described, with great rapidity, after which he drew aside while the coroner, assisted by the hotel doctor, lifted the body to the bed in order to proceed with their further examination.

But while he busied himself in studying with great care everything which the room contained, even going to the extent of using his magnifying glass for some

of his inspections, he never once lost sight of an act that was taking place beside the bed.

And as often as his eyes drifted there, they rested for an instant upon the figure of the hotel doctor, Crystal by name; why, he could not have told just then, save that the young man had impressed him unfavorably, and that also there was an uncanny suggestion of similarity of origin between the names of Crystal and Quartz.

Had this last thought been put into words to the detective, he doubtless at that moment would have repudiated it utterly as having any bearing upon the curious regard he bestowed upon the young doctor—and yet the thought was there.

But no matter how closely he searched the room, there was nowhere to be found a trace of the murdered woman's identity, or of the presence of another person than herself there—save that one, the pistol.

And he examined this last curiously.

It was of the thirty-two caliber, Smith & Wesson pattern, silver mounted, and studded with imitation jewels. The handle was mother-of-pearl; but there was nowhere any marks upon it, save that it was smutted with the smoke of three discharges, and that the remaining cartridges were imbedded in their places in a way which clearly showed that they had been in the chambers of the cylinder a long time.

The remarkable thing about the weapon was that its appearance indicated that the three empty chambers had been recently discharged, but also that there was nowhere in the room, or upon the body of the murdered woman, any indication of where the remaining two bullets had gone.

Still, that was not so remarkable, after all.

The fact might easily be explained by saying that the other two bullets had been fired a few hours, or even a day before the last one. There was no method by which even the most expert armorer could have told the length of time which had elapsed since any of the bullets had been discharged.

There was no sign of any baggage in the room, nor that any baggage had been there—not even so much as a hand satchel.

It seemed indeed as if the woman had calmly wai in there to her death, and had seated herself in the ch near the window to await it, as calmly as she wo have posed for a photograph.

"Not a guest of the hotel, either," mused the tective. "That is the most astonishing part of whole affair, and to that fact, if to no other, I will o any clew to the mystery of this case that I may obtai

He was through with his investigations and awa ing the others, when they finally turned away from t bed and faced him.

"Well, Mr. Carter," said the coroner, "we seem have about covered our scope of the examination the body, and I perceive that you are also finished."

"Quite so, coroner. There seems to be no more t can be done here save to direct that the body be s at once to some undertaker. Do you think, gentlem that any of you will have occasion to enter this roo again?"

He addressed them all, jointly and severally, w he asked the question, and swept his eyes from on another with a rapid, comprehensive glance.

"No," they replied in unison.

"In that case, chief," continued Nick, "I would a that you order this room closed and sealed as soon the body has been removed, and that you place t trustworthy men in charge here until that is done. merely wish to have the room left precisely as it for the present. You have not succeeded in discov ing any marks of identification either upon the bo or the clothing, I think I heard you say?"

"There is absolutely no mark upon anything," plied the coroner; and then with considerable vel mence, he added: "We have merely discovered a bea tiful young woman who has been murdered by damned scoundrel. I wish I had him here. I'd willing to take my chances with twelve good men i jury box, for killing him in cold blood."

"Your blood doesn't seem to very cold at just t particular moment," said Nick, smiling. "Now, bef we adjourn from this room, there is just one mo thing to be done."

He pointed toward a door at the far end of the roo

have never before seen a bridal chamber of the llence of this one which consisted of only one ," he continued, "and if I make no mistake, yon- room is a part of this suit, although the location e door, together with the fact that it is quite small narrow, might not suggest it."

I tried that door when I first entered the room, ore you came, Nick," said the chief.

I have had no doubt of it. It is locked; but all the e that door has been opened quite recently, and as unlocked and locked again, from the other side. at much I am positive about."

Dr. Crystal raised his eyes to Nick's, and spoke for first time directly to him.

How are you sure of that, if I may ask?" he in- red.

The best chambermaids in the world often neglect ething," replied Nick, coldly. "The one who had ge of this room did not brush around that door thoroughly. Now once upon a time—several days probably—a little spider got busy around that key- and the knob of the door. It is just a dainty little , scarcely visible to the naked eye, but plainly dis- nible with this glass. If you will take the trouble make use of this glass, Dr. Crystal, and examine it irself, you will find that there are two tiny webs oss the keyhole which have not been disturbed; and will find also that the webs stretch from there to knob, and thence across the jam of the door to frame of the picture which hangs next to it. The b from the keyhole to the knob has not been dis- bed, but from the knob to the frame it has been ken.

Gentlemen, the door has been opened from the er side, and closed again from the other side, with- t disturbing the knob or the keyhole on this side at The murderer, and I think also the murdered man, entered the room through that door."

In that case," said the coroner, hastily, "we should ke an examination of that room at once."

By all means," replied Nick; "only let us make it the other parties did, from the opposite side."

Sure," said the chief.

"And now, gentlemen, if you are ready, we will turn this room over to the officers and the undertaker."

He turned as he spoke and led the way out of the room into the hall.

There were several people gathered there, eager to know what had taken place in the room and what had been discovered, and among them, some of the servants of the hotel.

Nick dispatched one of these at once for the clerk who had been on duty when the murder was discovered, with instructions that he was to bring with him the pass-keys for that hall.

Fifteen minutes later, followed by the clerk, and the others who had been with him in the bridal chamber, he passed into the room he had indicated—entered it to find—much more than even he had anticipated.

CHAPTER IV.

A HOUSE OF HORROR.

Even Nick Carter was appalled by the scene which met his eyes as he stepped across the threshold of that second room, and he paused there, holding up his hand, and so stopping the others who were behind him, before they could get a view of the interior.

"Wait," he said; and he pulled the door half shut again so that the others could not see beyond him.

They halted where they stood, and then Nick added:

"I would like to have the coroner enter here alone with me for a moment," he said; and at the same time he managed to cast a significant glance into the eyes of the chief of police which was meant to assure him that he had a very particular reason for making the request.

Then he drew the coroner inside the door and closed it after them.

But instantly, as he did so, he clapped one hand over the coroner's mouth, for otherwise that officer would have cried out in horrified amazement at what he saw; and when the detective released him, he exclaimed, in a horrified whisper:

"My God! Another! Two of them! It is awful!"

"Three of them," said Nick, calmly. "Look there";

and he half turned the coroner so that he faced still another part of the room.

"Three!" ejaculated the coroner; and he stood aghast, speechless.

"Coroner," said Nick, quietly, "I called you in here to make a strange request of you—one which you will not entirely understand when I make it, and which I do not wish now to explain."

"Make it," replied the coroner. "I won't ask a question."

"Very well. It is this: I wish that during your further investigations into this matter—or, rather, these matters, for there are now three of them—that you would pretend to depend a great deal upon the sagacity of our friend on the other side of the door."

"Do you mean the chief?"

"No; I refer to Dr. Crystal."

"Ah!"

"Now, will you step outside with me again for a moment? I wish to ask a few questions of the clerk before we all enter this room together. Don't let them see that you have discovered any new horrors here."

"Then I think you had better leave me where I am. They could read my face like a book. I assure you that I will not move until you return."

"Good!"

Without more words Nick passed out of the door and closed and locked it behind him.

There were now perhaps two dozen people in the hallway, and they had crowded uncomfortably close to the waiting men outside the room; but at a sign from the detective, the officers drove them back to a respectful distance—that is, so that they were entirely out of hearing of the whispered conversation which ensued.

"Please gather close around me, gentlemen," said Nick. "I wish to ask a few questions before we enter this room. Thank you."

Then, addressing the clerk of the hotel, he began:

"What is your name, please?"

"George Harris," replied the clerk.

"You are night clerk here?"

"I am chief clerk."

"Was it you who discovered the body in the room?"

"Yes."

"Will you tell me how it happened that you covered it at that hour, instead of its being found one of the servants of the house?"

"Certainly. It is very simple."

"The simpler, the better. Go on."

"I always remain around the hotel corridors after one o'clock at night. The day clerk and the clerk change at twelve o'clock; that is, one goes duty, and——"

"Yes, yes. I understand."

"It was perhaps ten or fifteen minutes before two or might have been a few moments later, when night clerk came to take his place. He was behind desk with the day man and both were busy in the rangement of their accounts when a carriage drove at the door, and a gentleman and lady entered.

"One could see at a glance that they were bride groom, even if they had sought to disguise the which they did not."

"And the other two clerks being busy, you rose receive them as they entered; eh?"

"Precisely. I met them halfway to the desk. of the hall boys already had their two satchels."

"Were there many people in the corridor at time?"

"No; it happened to be almost deserted."

"Well, go ahead. What next?"

"As I met the gentleman with the lady on his a he smiled at me in a rather conscious manner, and s he wanted the bridal chamber, if we had such a thi if not, then the best suit of rooms in the house; and added:

"'Do me the favor to register for me. We wo like to go right up, if you please.'

"'Certainly,' I replied. 'I will conduct you to yo rooms in person and I will register you when I retu

"I asked him to follow me; at the same time I cal to one of the boys to get me the keys to Suit A. T key was handed to me as I reached the elevator. T boy with the bags went up the stairs.

aturally, when we reached the second floor, I pre- the bride and groom along the hall. I walked ly, so that when I reached the door of Suit A, were thirty or forty feet behind me."

nd then——?" asked Nick.

hy, then I opened the door of the suit, entered urned on the electric lights."

hat is done, I suppose, from a switch near the , which lights them all at the same time?"

es."

nd then——?"

hen I heard a woman scream in the doorway. I d and saw that it was the bride. She was stand- on the threshold, pointing with her finger across room past me. Her eyes were staring, and she ed in the act of fainting, and her husband behind was in the act of catching her, when I turned to what it was that had frightened her. That is the I discovered the body."

What did you do then?"

Why, I ran toward the body in the chair to make that it was a corpse. Then, of course, my first ught was for my guests, and for the name of the el."

Well?"

I ran out of the room again, turning off the lights locking the door as I did so."

And the bride and groom; where were they?"

They were making with all speed toward the stair- y, the woman, half fainting, was leaning heavily n the arm of her husband. I overtook them, and something about it's being an awful sight for them ncounter so soon after their marriage, and I hoped, my sake, they would say as little about it as pos- e. I asked the gentleman if he would permit me to w them to another apartment on another floor."

And he replied—what?"

He said: 'Damn you, sir, do you think I would re- in in the house with my wife after such a sight as t?' And then he added, quickly: 'I beg your par- n. It is, of course, no more your fault than mine; we must leave all the same.'

He asked then if we had a side entrance where they could get out quietly without being seen, and I directed the boy who stood near holding their bags, to take them out. Then I apologized again, and as they walked away through the corridor, following the boy, I hurried downstairs to the telephone and communicated with the captain of this precinct."

"So you don't even know the names of the bride and groom who solicited the bridal chamber," said Nick, coldly. "You permitted them to depart without even asking their names, eh?"

"I did, for a fact," replied the clerk. "Can you blame me?"

"No," said Nick. "And yet, I wish you had asked the question."

CHAPTER V.

"I COULD SWEAR TO THE MAN."

"At least," continued the detective, "you did your duty in telephoning at once to the police station. Now——"

"Just one moment, Carter," interrupted the chief, who drew Nick aside and whispered:

"The officer who relieved me at headquarters when I left for home last night has just arrived. He says that at twelve-ten a telephone message came to him from the night clerk of this hotel, announcing that there were three murders here instead of one. What do you make of that?"

"Wait a moment," replied Nick, "and we will see."

Then he turned again to the clerk, Harris.

"Did you also telephone to headquarters?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Who did?"

"Nobody from this house."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure? Of course I am. Four detectives came here from headquarters about half-past twelve, saying they had been sent here and that three murders had been committed in the house. I speedily satisfied them that there was only one, and they soon left again. The captain of the precinct had the matter in hand, and as

the riot had been reported, he told them he did not need them here. I heard him say that to them."

"But some person purporting to be the night clerk sent such a message to headquarters."

"So the four officers told me. But it was not any of our clerks, nor was any message sent to headquarters at all from this house."

"Yet there is unmistakable proof that some person felt sufficiently interested in the affair to send a message there, and to declare that there were three murders instead of one. Have you looked through the house to see if more than one crime has been committed?"

"Certainly not."

"How many rooms are there to this bridal suit?"

"Two and a bath."

"Did you look through the other rooms?"

"No. The doors between them are kept locked. The rooms have not been used since the hotel was opened. I was about to open them last night when the bride and groom came, but—well, you know why I did not."

"This is the door to the second room, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Now, why are you so positive that no telephone message was sent from this house to police headquarters?"

"Because, when the officers came here from there, I made careful inquiry. Not a telephone in this house was used last night, public or private, which I do not know about."

"Chief," said Nick, turning to that official, "I wish you would do me the favor to have one of your men make inquiry at every place where there is a telephone in the neighborhood, and find out if one of them was used—stay! Just have 'Central' called, and inquire from what telephone near here there was a call at, or near, twelve-ten, for your office. Then send your man there and get a description of the one who sent in the call. Now, Mr. Harris."

"Yes, sir."

"Describe your groom of last night; the man whose name you did not think to inquire."

"He was a tall, fine-looking fellow, about twenty-eight or thirty years old, with a sandy mustache, eyes and very red lips. He walked with a slight li and was dressed in a Prince Albert suit with li trousers and tall hat. He carried a cane and w tan gloves. The bride wore a veil, but her hair black. She had a good figure, and in the single glim that I caught of her face when she discovered murdered woman in the room she was to occupy thought her beautiful, although she was so frighte and I was so startled that I do not think I could scribe her. She wore a traveling dress of gray m terial, but I cannot describe it; I never could tell ab a woman's costume."

"You have done very well. That will do for present. I wish, however, that you would remain the house until I see you again."

"Very good, sir."

Nick waited until he was out of hearing, and t turned abruptly to Dr. Crystal.

"Now, doctor," he said, "I would like to ask yo few questions. When did you first hear that a m der had been committed in the house?"

"Almost as soon as Harris discovered it," repl the doctor, calmly. "I was in the café, having j returned from an outside call. As soon as Har had sent the message to the police, he came to me a told me the circumstance."

"Thank you. The coroner, who is still inside t room, tells me that he wishes you to assist him sor what further, if you will be so good. And now, if y are ready, gentlemen, we will enter this room."

He opened the door, holding it so that Dr. Cry should be the first to enter after him, and he watch the man narrowly as he crossed the threshold, but I Quartz himself could not have shown a more immob countenance than he did. And when his eyes res upon the bodies in the room, he started like one w has received a sudden and terrible shock, stagge back one step, recovered himself and his composu and then, turning to the detective, said, with a h smile:

"Your surprises are rather confounding, Mr. C ter."

he remark was apparently made with some resent-
lt, which was quite natural under the circumstances;
the others had entered in the meantime, and Nick
closed the door again, so he made no response.

We will pass over the remarks of surprise which
e now exchanged between the five men—for the
er from headquarters had also entered the room
a them.

The two bodies which confronted them were of a
n and a woman.

The woman was plainly the serving maid of the
de; the man was as evidently the groom.

The maid was seated in a chair near the window, in
ch the same attitude as her mistress occupied in the
joining room, and there was a bullet hole in the
ddle of her forehead, in precisely the same spot.

The man was stretched upon the floor, across the
eshold of the door which communicated between
s room and the bath room. He was fully habited
evening dress, and in appearance he precisely an-
ered to the description given by the clerk Harris,
the bridegroom who had called and gone away again
th his new-made wife after the discovery of the
gedy in the front room of the suit.

In his case, the bullet hole was in the back of his
ad, at the base of the brain, and death had evidently
en quite as sudden as in the other cases.

Nothing in either of the rooms had been disturbed,
ve that in the bath room the bowl was half filled
th water which had been used, and a towel, also
ce used, laid upon the marble slab beside it.

It was evident from the position in which he was
ng, that he had been coming out of the bath room,
d had turned toward it again for some purpose, when
bullet which killed him was fired.

The key to the door between the two principal
oms of the suit was lying upon a table in the center
the room, where it had evidently been placed by the
rderer after committing his triple deed of horror.

And that was all there was to discover, although the
n worked long and carefully in the effort to find
ne clew to the crimes.

There was absolutely nothing in the pockets of the man's clothing—not so much as a handkerchief. No watch, no ring, no jewel of any sort, nor the evidence of any. Not a penny in money—not an item.

There was no mark upon his clothing—not even that of the tailor who made them, which had in each case been carefully and skillfully cut away. No laundry marks upon his linen—absolutely nothing anywhere, in short.

And with the maid it was the same.

She was merely a woman of perhaps thirty, with reddish hair, and whose hands demonstrated what her employment had been.

It was evident to the detective that the person who had committed the crime was an expert in destroying evidence, for in none of the rooms was there a single thing which could offer the slightest clew to work upon.

Nick unlocked the door between the two rooms, and, followed by the others, passed through. But they remained there only a moment, and then returned to the inner room again, and thence, the examinations being completed, out again into the hall, locking the door behind them.

Directions were given for the care of the other bodies, and the party adjourned to the ground floor and entered the private office of the hotel.

Not a whisper was given out of what had been discovered. There would be time enough for that when the undertakers came, two or three hours later; and now, Nick's first act was to call the clerk Harris to his side while he signaled for the others to wait for him there.

"I want you to come with me a moment, Mr. Harris," he said; and he led the way back again to the room where the two bodies were found.

At the door he paused an instant and said, kindly, to his companion:

"Mr. Harris, I do not wish unnecessarily to shock you, so I will tell you now that the report that there had been three murders here, instead of one, was correct. The remaining two bodies are inside this room, and I wish you to see them."

"My God!" exclaimed Harris, wringing his hands. "Our business will be utterly ruined."

"I am afraid so," assented Nick. "Come."

He led the way into the room, and for a moment it seemed as if poor Harris would fall in a faint, so terrible to him was the sight before him, and so appalling were the evident consequences.

The two corpses were now side by side upon the floor, resting upon blankets and pillows.

"I want you to look at them," said Nick, "and to tell me if you have ever seen either of them before."

The clerk approached them timorously; but suddenly he threw up his hands and exclaimed:

"Mr. Carter, I could swear on a stack of Bibles as high as the Eiffel Tower, that this is the very man who brought his bride here at midnight, and who afterward went away with her. Everything about him is precisely the same, save the dress. I could swear it is the same man. I could swear to it."

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNKNOWN BRIDE AND GROOM.

"Sit down, Harris; I want to talk to you," said Nick.

"What! Here, in this room?"

"Yes. Why not? We are sure that we will not be interrupted here."

"It is rather awful to keep a fellow here, with—with those things. However, I suppose I can stand it."

"Harris, how do you account for the presence of unknown guests in these rooms?"

"I do not account for it. I cannot."

"And yet they were here—are here, in fact."

"True, sir."

"It would not seem that such persons, dressed as they were, could pass through the corridors of your hotel, unnoticed."

"Certainly not."

"When were these rooms last occupied?"

"They have never been occupied at all, since the house was opened."

"You are sure of that?"

"Positive."

"How many guests have you in the hotel at this present moment?"

"About eighty or ninety."

"When did you come on duty yesterday?"

"Between ten and eleven in the morning."

"Did anybody who suggests any of these three persons who have been killed, enter the house yesterday?"

"Nobody but the man who came with his bride at midnight."

"And you are still as sure as ever of the identity—putting the costume aside—between them?"

"Yes. Of course, now, on sober second thought, I know it is not possible that they were, or are, the same, and yet it still seems to me impossible that they are not."

"Have you discovered any resemblance of feature between the body of the bride who now lies dead in the next room, and the one who came through your office at midnight?"

"N-o-o. There might be a resemblance, and now that you speak of it, I don't know but there is; but they are not the same."

"Of course. That goes without saying; just as it also goes that the men are not the same. But still you think there is a resemblance?"

"Possibly. This woman is much handsomer than the other—and not so dark."

"Now, about that other. When she screamed out at the discovery she made, did the scream seem quite natural?"

"You bet it did."

"And when you looked into her face, from which I understand you to say she had thrown her veil aside, was the horror which you say was depicted on her face at that time—was it, in your judgment, quite natural and spontaneous, or was it—that is, could it have been assumed? In other words, do you think her horror was real, that her surprise was the real thing, or that it was all a clever piece of acting?"

The clerk shook his head emphatically.

"No actress who ever lived, or who ever will liv

ld assume such an expression as that one I saw on
n face," he asserted, with vehemence.

"Good. Did she instantly draw down her veil?"

"No; the man drew it down for her while they were
lking away from me down the hall, when I followed
em out of the room."

"You are sure of that?"

"I saw it, therefore I am sure of it."

"And she was half fainting, you say?"

"More than that. I think for an instant she actually
st herself. He was shaking her with all his might,
nd talking to her in an undertone."

"You did not hear anything he said?"

"Not a word."

"And when you spoke to him, he seemed very angry,
id he?"

"At first. Then he apologized."

"And how did he look at the time?"

"Almost as frightened as she did, although he had
tter control of himself."

"Naturally, since he was a man. Describe as exactly
s you can how he appeared."

"He was very pale. He seemed almost in a flunk
imself. He kept licking his lips while he talked, as
f they were dry, and I noticed, as excited as I was,
hat he felt for his hip pocket several times, as if there
as a gun there and he would like to use it. You know
was raised on a ranch, and I know such signs."

"Good again."

"Now, have you seen the boy again, who carried
heir baggage out for them?"

"No. I have not thought of him at all."

"Where is he?"

"He was off duty at midnight. It was his time to go
ithin a minute or two, when he took their bags."

"I see. So in all probability he went home at once
fter he had conducted them out of the building."

"Undoubtedly."

"And yet, a boy like that, seeing all the excitement
ut him, would naturally have waited to see the out-
me of it all, don't you think?"

"Now that you speak of it I do think so."

"I want you, when you go downstairs again, to send for that boy—send an officer if necessary—and keep him here until I can talk with him. But I doubt if you will find him; I think you will find that he has thrown up his job without warning."

"Why? He could not have had anything to do with the thing."

"No; but he could have served that man and woman a very good turn, for very good pay, if my surmise is correct."

"Do you think they knew what we would find in that room, before they came here?" asked Harris, quickly.

"I did think so until we had this little talk, but I have changed my mind."

"I thought of the same thing, at one time—right after it happened; but I have also changed my mind since I have thought it over."

"Why have you changed your mind?"

"Well, sir, a hotel clerk, if he is any good on earth, is a mighty good judge of faces, and that bride's face, even though I only caught a glimpse of it, was the real thing; and so was the groom's."

"Good for the third time. You have given me three very good answers. Now, tell me how his face impressed you, after you had calmly thought the matter over."

"As that of a man who had seen a ghost which he was mighty sure was a ghost. In other words, of a man who is physically brave, but who for once in his life is dead scared."

"Good again. Now, when they took their departure so hastily, did the fact strike you that it was because—well, what? You answer the question without my making any suggestion."

"Why, it seemed to me afterward, as if they were flying from an enemy. I don't think they cared a hang about the appearance of things, for I don't think that either of them gave it a thought. They were both anxious to run away from some imminent danger."

"That's the idea; and that is what they were doing. Harris, have you ever heard of Dr. Quartz?"

"Often."

"Have you ever seen him?"

"Often."

"Has he ever stopped in this hotel?"

"He was here all of last week. He occupied the suit of rooms directly back of this one. His house was undergoing repairs, or something of the kind. Of course, we did not know then what a scoundrel he is——"

"Oh, I know that. Is that suit now occupied?"

"Dr. Crystal has the parlor and bath of it. The remaining room is let out as a single bedroom."

"Excellent. Were the two doctors apparently friends, when Quartz was here?"

"Not more than ordinary hotel acquaintances."

"Did it ever occur to you that they might have known each other before?"

"No; I never thought about it."

"How long have you known Dr. Crystal?"

"Since we opened the house."

"Well, what about him?"

"Nothing. He came here as a guest. He apparently had plenty of money. He said he wished to open a practice in this city, and offered to take a suit of rooms permanently if we would permit him to put his shingle in the office."

"Which you agreed to?"

"Naturally. We secured a good-paying guest in that way. Most hotel doctors want favors. He asked for none."

"Do you know where he came from?"

"Washington, I think. No, I do not know, but I have heard him mention Washington as if he was familiar with the place."

"Were Crystal and Quartz often together when the latter was here?"

"They sometimes dined in the café together—that is, at the same table; but I think that is all I noticed."

"Now, one question more which will save me a lot of trouble if you have the answer ready, and I think you will, for you are a careful hotel man. Have you made diligent inquiry in the house in reference to pistol shots being heard, or strangers being seen on the corridors before, and about the time the tragedy occurred—or is supposed to have occurred?"

"Yes, sir. The answer to every question you would ask on those points, is no."

"All right. Now go back to the office where the others are waiting, call the chief aside and whisper to him that on no account is he to allow Crystal to leave them until I return. Tell the chief to tell the coroner the same thing. After that, I want you to return here with the proper keys to admit me to Crystal's rooms, and after you have done that, return to the others and wait for me."

Fifteen minutes later, Nick Carter was alone in Dr. Crystal's rooms.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FALSE FACE OF A CORPSE.

Just what the detective discovered in that room will soon be told. Suffice it for the present to say that after something more than half an hour he returned to the private office of the hotel, and announced:

"Coroner, I wish you and Dr. Crystal would wait here a little longer, if you don't mind. I think I will have a few professional questions to ask of you both when I return. Just now, I want the chief alone with me for a quarter of an hour."

The chief followed him out of the room, and with a simple request to the latter that he follow him, Nick led the way again to the room where the bodies of the unknown man and the lady's maid were lying.

"Chief," he said, when they were in the room behind locked doors, "do you remember that when we discussed the case of the freightcar murders, I spoke of the revelations which I expected the expert from New York, Dr. Wentworth, would make for us?"*

"Certainly."

"I shall not need him now."

"Why not?"

"Because I have already discovered all that he could tell me about embalming poisons—or, rather, of course I don't mean all that he knows, but all that he could tell me about that case. Now please don't ask que

*See preceding number NICK CARTER WEEKLY, "Dr. Quartz at Bay."

's for a moment. Let me follow out what I have
ind."

"Go ahead."

"I have not questioned the coroner about the bodies,
ll, because I knew that you would cover that ground
ile I was busy with other things."

"Well, I did."

"For the present, then, I merely want a few simple
estions answered, and I think you already have the
swers from him."

"Probably. I have been rather thoroughly into the
bject with both doctors."

"Then before I go any further, what is your opinion
Crystal?"

"He knows his business all right, only he is too ever-
ting china-faced."

"Exactly. Now to the questions."

"Ask them."

"Has any opinion been expressed about the length
time that has expired since life was extinct from
three bodies? Please speak of them separately."

"No. There is no decided opinion in any of the
es. They think, however, that the man was killed
."

"Well, how long have they been dead, according to
pert opinion?"

"Neither doctor would give a positive opinion, con-
ting themselves with agreeing with each other that
lve or fourteen hours must have elapsed."

"No more than that in any of the cases, eh?"

"No; the coroner said such a thing would be im-
sible without his knowing it at once, and he men-
ned a lot of technical terms which I don't remem-
."

"Well, for one thing, decay would have made its
earance in that case."

"Yes; he said that. And whatever he said, the other
or agreed with him."

"Suppose I should tell you that all three of them
been dead a week or more; what would you say?"

"I should say that you were daffy, and so would
."

"And yet I do say that very thing."

"Nonsense."

"Do you remember how perfectly the bodies found in the freight car were embalmed?"

"Of course I do. You don't mean to say ——"

The chief paused in absolute consternation. Nick smiled.

"I do mean to say that very thing," he said.

"Good Heaven, Carter! You don't mean to say that those bodies have laid in this room and the one next to it a whole week or more, do you?"

"No; I did not say that."

"Then what in blazes do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. That the bodies have been dead, every one of them, for a week or more; but I will add to that, that they were only yesterday prepared for this exhibition—which, in its way, beats the freight car all hollow—and that they were placed here in the positions in which we found them, since six o'clock last night. That is to say, within the last twelve hours, for it is now almost six in the morning."

"Embalmed, eh? It seems incredible.'

"It is incredible to modern science that such perfect embalming is possible; but we know it is from the freight car experience, although that was by no means as perfect as this."

"Great Scott!"

"More of Dr. Quartz's wonderful science, chief."

"But Quartz was in prison. He couldn't have brought them here, and even if he could, how could they have been carried into the hotel and brought into these rooms without discovery? The thing is preposterous!"

"Quartz might have had an agent to act for him in his absence—an agent who was to act in the matter in any case, even if Quartz had not been in limbo, for one thing; and, the bodies might already have been in the house," said the detective, replying to both questions at once.

The chief settled back in his chair and placed his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, too amazed to reply at once. Presently he said:

"And I suppose that now you will say that Dr. Crys-

tal is the agent, and that the bodies have been in his rooms all this time."

"Exactly that."

"Well, I have got past arguing with you; but the thing doesn't sound real."

"Come here a moment," said Nick, rising; "let me show you something."

He led the way across the room and got upon his knees beside the body of the man.

"Get down here a moment, chief, I want to tell you something and to show you something."

"All right. Here I am."

"When I brought Harris into this room and showed him this body, his exclamation was that this was the very man who came to the hotel with his bride at midnight last night, and applied for the bridal chamber—all save the clothing. He looked again, and was still as certain of the resemblance as before."

"Well?"

"Next, on questioning him, I found that the bride and groom, who came here last night, were not, or did not appear to be half so much frightened at discovering the corpse in their room as they were concerned over their own immediate safety."

"What of that?"

"Let us go back to the freightcar affair again for a moment. Do you remember that I was all the time of the opinion in that case, that those murders with the bodies arranged as they were, were intended as one of Dr. Quartz's object lessons to somebody he had threatened, and therefore doomed?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, here we see the object lesson carried out to the end."

"Have we got to remain on our knees beside this corpse in order to discuss this?" asked the chief.

"For a moment longer, yes."

"Well, go ahead. I'll be as patient as I can."

"Don't I interest you, chief?"

"Mightily; and so do my old knees; but go on."

"Look, then,"

Nick withdrew his knife from his pocket, opened it, and with the point of the blade cut a small half circle, of the size of a silver three-cent piece, seemin through the skin of the corpse just where the mustac appeared to grow from it.

"What in blazes are you going to do now?" manded the chief.

"Wait, and you will see," replied Nick.

Next he inserted the blade slowly under the su posed skin where he had made the incision, and th with a quick wrench jerked it free, bringing with a section of the enamel, with the hairs of the mustach adhering to it.

"Stop!" exclaimed the chief.

"Don't be frightened," said Nick. "I have not i jured the face of the corpse in the least, for the ve good reason that I have not touched it."

"I'd like to know what you call it."

"Look, and you will see. Here! Take this gla and you will see better."

The chief accepted the glass and bent down low ov the corpse. For a moment he was motionless, and th he leaped to his feet, dropping the glass to the floor.

"Nick, you're a wonder!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, no I'm not," replied Nick, carefully replaci the bit he had torn away from the face and pressi it down into position again. "I discovered all the e planation of this in the next room—in the room Dr. Crystal, who is Dr. Quartz's favorite and mo promising pupil.

"You see," he continued, "after this body was e balmed, and it had gone through all the stages nec sary to embalm it to the satisfaction of the men w worked over it, their next desire was to make it semble, as perfectly as possible, another individ And right here is where the consummate art of th fiends makes itself most apparent.

"Have you never heard, chief, that in Paris th are people who call themselves artists, to whom woman can apply and have her face so transformed made over with enamel and pigments that sh changed from a homely woman into a beautiful o So long as that woman does not laugh or weep, so as she refrains from applying moisture to her face

ains this enamel coating which renders her beautiful; when water comes in contact with it, it is spoiled and she is forced to have the operation repeated.

"Now this is a case where that same art has been employed, and with a much greater degree of safety for the simple reason that the object of it was beyond the possibility of smiling or weeping.

"This man here—the face of this corpse was simply made over by Drs. Quartz and Crystal, to be so perfect a copy of the face of the man who applied here as a room last night, that his best friends would not know the difference."

"But the undertakers would have discovered the fraud the moment they began to prepare the body for burial," said the chief.

"Certainly. And, of course, the doctor was aware of that fact; hence we have a right to conclude that it was neither the public nor the friends of the man he imitated whom the wily doctor wished to deceive, but that it was the man himself whom he wished to affect."

"You mean, I suppose, that this corpse was prepared for the man whom it imitates, and was intended as a frightful warning to him?"

"Yes; that is about what I mean. The fact is, I can see in this affair one of Dr. Quartz's unheard-of experiments—and he is always experimenting in fields which no other man of science in the world would think of investigating."

"Well, what sort of an experiment do you see?"

"Let us suppose that he believes he can drive a strong man insane through sheer terror. I should say that he could not accomplish such a feat with me; you would say the same of yourself. Every strong man in the world would say the same thing of himself, and the doctor merely wishes to prove that the position is false and that it can be done.

"Of course, this is only conjecture—but all the same it looks like Dr. Quartz."

"Nice, comfortable sort of a citizen to have fooling around a fellow, isn't he?"

"Rather. Now, if you will take this glass again and examine the bullet hole in the forehead of the maid, and also of the mistress in the other room, you will see that the appearance of freshness of the wound is given to it by a brush. In the case of this man, the hole is in the back of the head, and art was not necessary.

"You see, Quartz evidently intended the corpse of this man to be placed in the other room with his supposed bride, so that the man who came here as the groom last night to take these rooms, would see it; but for some reason his plans miscarried. When Dr. Crystal was arranging the scene yesterday afternoon or last evening, something interrupted him so that he did not have time to finish his arrangements as he intended them, and he was compelled to drop the body where we found it."

"But how in the world did he get the bodies into these rooms at all, Carter?"

For reply, Nick stepped to the end of the room and pulled aside a massive rosewood wardrobe, thus disclosing the fact that its bulk concealed a door which communicated with the adjoining suit of rooms.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WOMAN WIZARD'S WORK.

"Ah! Through that door!" exclaimed the chief.

"Precisely. Through that door. You will notice, if you will step into the bath room, that it is not quite as long as this room is wide, and that the difference in width is rather more than the width of this wardrobe."

"Yes."

"The same condition exists in the rooms of Dr. Crystal, which are next to these. His bath room is just beyond this one, and in his rooms there is another wardrobe, something like this one, in the same relative position."

"I see."

"When the bath rooms were built at the time these many dwelling houses were changed over into this hotel, that passage was left there so that when necessary these two suits could be thrown into one, but in order to hide that fact from a guest who merely wished to occupy one of them, those two large wardrobes were put in their places and covered the two doors.

"While poking around Crystal's rooms, I moved that wardrobe and so found the doors and the passageway between them; so, don't you see how simple the whole thing is?"

"Yes; only that I don't quite see the difference between introducing the bodies into Crystal's rooms, and these."

"Why, my dear chief, they could walk into Crystal's rooms alive, induced there by some decoy of which we are ignorant, and which is at present unimportant to us. Many patients go to and from his rooms, and it would never be noticed if one or two or three of them did not go out again after they had once entered it."

"And they were murdered there, eh?"

"They were killed in that room. They were embalmed in that room. They were arranged in the costumes they now wear, in that room. The face of this man was enameled in that room. I have positive proofs of every one of those statements in my possession already, for my two assistants who followed me to this hotel when I was summoned here, are at this moment seated in Dr. Crystal's apartments, in full possession, and prepared to place him under arrest the moment he enters it, if any chance should take him there before I am ready for him to go there."

"Nick, you make the entire police force look like thirty cents."

"No, I do not. I have not done one whit better than you could have done yourself if you had had the benefit of the previous experience with Dr. Quartz, the first, that I have had."

"But what made you suspect Crystal in the first place?"

"Ah! There I cannot answer you, unless you can inform me why you say it is going to rain when your pet corn stings. Perhaps it was because his name is Crystal. You did not know that Quartz lived in this hotel for a week, and that he and Crystal were known to each other or you would have suspected the same as I did."

"Then you have discovered the murderer and practically have him under arrest without going out of the hotel, and within seven hours from the time it wa committed."

"Not so fast, chief. We have not found the re murderer by a long shot, for he has just escaped fro police headquarters, and is now at large; but we ha found the chief accessory before and after the fact, an one who is quite as guilty as the principal. It is up t us now to get Quartz."

"By thunder, that is so!"

"And I mean to make Crystal lead us to him if th is possible. Don't ask me how just yet, for I do n know. But I think it can be done. And in that dire tion, I want one favor, chief."

"What is it?"

"When we return to the office, I don't want you t show by word or deed that you hold the slightest su picion of Crystal. I want to keep him in the mood h is in now, as long as it is possible to do so. He is co placently sneering at us, and for that reason I think can keep him from going to his rooms for the prese without his suspecting my intention."

"It is a pity, Nick, that we don't know where to plac our hands on the man and woman who came here t gether last night to engage these rooms."

"I don't think we will have any difficulty in locatin them, chief."

"I'm sure I hope not."

"Listen: When you sent for me at three o'clock thi morning, I told my two assistants, Patsy and Ten-Ich to follow me here, and to wait around the corridor unt I wanted them. I had also received a telegram fro Chick, my chief assistant, that he was due here midnight. He had not arrived at three, so I told th boys to leave a note for him to come here also, as so as he arrived. It seems that his train was late, and th he did not arrive in the city until about four, but soon as he went to my lodgings and found the note th was left for him, he came on here without delay."

"And is now here in the hotel, eh?"

"Not on your life. He has gone to find that ha some couple who were married last night, and who plied here for the bridal chamber—he has gone to the man whom this corpse was made to resemble

d Harris, the clerk, to send after the boy who car-
d the satchels for those people, and Chick appeared
the scene just in time to be the messenger."

The chief rubbed his hands together in satisfaction.

"You seem to have covered about every point there
" he said, gleefully.

"Well, there are other things which I am anxious
take up, and that is why I wish to defer the arrest
Crystal as long as possible."

"What, for instance?"

"I want to know about that riot; I want to know
out the coincidence of the riot and the discovery of
e murders here; I want to know how it all happened
splendidly as to act for the escape of Dr. Quartz
om prison, when I am sure that he had no idea, when
arranged these things, that he would be in prison
the time. And that leads me to the other point for
ishing this talk alone with you."

"What is that?"

"You have not told me how Quartz escaped. All the
formation I have on that point, is the whispered
atement from you that he had escaped. How was it
one?"

"By Jove, Nick, you know about as much about it
I do."

"Tell me all you do know."

"Well, it's this way:" The chief referred to a
emorandum in his pocket, and continued:

"This is taken from the blotter at my office. I left
ere at twelve o'clock, midnight. At twelve-seven the
ptain of this precinct telephoned in that a murder
d been discovered at this hotel, and that he would
lephone more fully, later on. At twelve-ten a second
lephone came in purporting to be from the night
erk here, announcing that three murders had hap-
ened here, and asking for men to be sent from the
ntral office. Four men were sent at once—that is,
ey left for here at twelve-seventeen. At twelve-
enty-three the riot was reported, and at twelve-thirty-
ree the reserves were sent out from all over the city,
cluding what could be spared from headquarters. At
elve-thirty-five all the detective force that could be
ared from headquarters were sent to the scene of the
riot, and the captain whom I had left in charge there considered it his duty—very properly—to go in person, so he left the office in charge of Sergt. Green and went himself to the riot; but he telephoned first to my house about it all. I arrived there soon afterward and came directly downtown again, but I went first to the scene of the riot, and then came here. I have not been to my office yet."

"Go ahead, chief. All this is exceedingly interesting to me."

"Green went on duty at twelve-fifty. He had come on general duty at midnight after having been off eighteen hours, and he knew nothing of the Quartz affairs, and there was so much going on that he did not have time to read the blotter for the day, or, if he did, forgot it. At all events he did not know that Quartz and Zanoni were prisoners."

"Well?"

"Here is where I run into a snag, Carter. At three-forty this morning, you requested me to inquire after the health of Dr. Quartz, and that is the first that I, or anybody knew of his escape. He got away, and Zanoni with him—or, rather, as it appears, Zanoni got away and Quartz with her, some time between twelve-fifty and three-forty."

"But how did they get away?"

"All I can tell you about that, is this: Headquarters was almost bare of officers after twelve-fifty, as you know. The matron who was in charge of Zanoni was found, when I telephoned at your request—she was found on the sofa in Zanoni's cell room, drugged and unconscious, her face covered with a fine, white powder. The door of the cell was open, and Zanoni was gone. In the main corridor of the prison part of headquarters, big Tom Mulligan, the biggest man on the force, but also quite an old man, was found in the same condition. He had been left in charge of the prison and was the only man in that part of the building except the prisoners—and there were only three in the place besides the two we are talking about."

"Mulligan had been served the same trick as the matron, eh?"

"Yes."

"And where was the man you had left as a special watch over Quartz?"

"He was an uncommonly good man in an emergency, and he had been called off for the riots and another man put in his place. The other man had not received my direct orders, he had also come on duty at midnight and knew little or nothing about Quartz; and Zanoni evidently found no difficulty in approaching him and serving him in the same way she served Mulligan."

"So he had some of the white powder on his face, too, did he?"

"Yes."

"And she, of course, had the keys from Mulligan, and found no difficulty in opening the doctor's cell."

"Not the slightest. She simply opened the door of his cell, and they walked out of headquarters together, with nobody to hinder them. There was nobody in their way at all, save Green and the night clerk in the office, and two policemen who were probably inside the private office also, hungry for news from the riot, and two detective sergeants in the detective bureau, which is on another corridor."

"So Quartz and Zanoni walked out together, unseen."

"That is precisely what they did."

"And the explanation of it is that Zanoni had the white powder concealed somewhere about her where it was not found when she was searched; that she called the matron into her cell upon some pretext, and threw the powder—which was probably one of Quartz's wonderful drug compounds—into her face. It overcame her, and the rest was easy."

"Yes; especially as she took the precaution to change clothes with the matron before she left the cell. By Jove, Nick, I thought that woman was crazy, but now —well, now I think she is a wizard."

"At least," said Nick, "we might call this escap one of Dr. Quartz's quick moves, eh?"

CHAPTER IX.

QUARTZ IS A BETTER HAUL THAN GOLD.

"Has it occurred to you, chief, that I perhaps had double purpose in placing my two assistants inside th rooms of Dr. Crystal, to be on the watch there, and t wait till further orders?"

"I never attempt to explain your reasons for things Carter. You tell."

"You have already had some experience with th daring insolence of Quartz, eh?"

"I should say I had."

"Well, does it not occur to you that it would b just like him—just the thing he would elect to do, t come here to this hotel as soon as he was at liberty and had adopted some suitable disguise, in order t look on and see what was taking place; as well as als to be on hand to render assistance to Crystal if h should need it?"

"Do you think he would dare do that, Carter?"

"I think it is what he would take infinite delight i doing."

"It would be a risky play for him to make under th circumstances."

"He delights in taking risks; and, besides, he doe not know all the circumstances. Remember his conceit I have told you about that often enough. He is eate up with it. You can't kill it in him. He can't lose i It would never occur to him that we would get withi forty miles of the truth of the affair under a week a least."

The chief shook his head.

"I hardly think he would dare to come to this hotel he said.

"I do. At least, that is what I figure on."

"Well, what else?"

"If he should come here—if, in fact, he is somewhere out the hotel at this minute——"

"Great Jehosophat, Nick! You don't think that, do ou?"

"I shouldn't wonder if he is within sound of a rifle ot at this minute. It would not surprise me in the ast. It would be just like him."

"Humph!" said the chief.

"As I was saying," continued Nick, "if he is somehere about this hotel at this minute, and has found it ossible to get inside without attracting attention, hich he could do with little or no trouble as you know, account of the excitement, it would not surprise me he should make use of a key which he doubtless posesses, and enter the rooms of Dr. Crystal. I only ope he will do so."

"He'd run into Patsy and Ten-Ichi, wouldn't he?"

"Yes; and he would find them fully prepared to reeive him, too."

"It might not be a bad idea to take a look in there ow, Nick. Did you leave the door at the other end f the little corridor unlocked?"

"Yes; and this one, too; and I pulled the wardrobe the other side, out from the wall just far enough that I could enter from this side if I wanted to."

"Then let's take a peek in there. I would like to see e inside of that room before we go downstairs."

"All right. Come ahead."

"I'm with you."

"Be as still as a mouse, chief. We will see what the oys are doing. I think I can get inside that room ithout their hearing me, for I took the precaution oil the hinges thoroughly when I examined the oors."

The way between the two suits of rooms has already een described. It was through a passage as long as the width of two bath rooms—that is, about fourteen feet in length—with a heavy door at either end of it.

Nick opened the first door silently and passed through it, followed by the chief.

Neither of them made a sound.

When the second door was reached, Nick turned the knob cautiously, smiling to himself when it gave forth no sound whatever, and pushing the door open as far as it would go on account of the wardrobe beyond it, passed through it sideways, the chief following.

Nick paused to listen a moment, but there was nothing to be heard; and then, after a second of hesitation, he stepped quickly out from behind the wardrobe into the full glare of a lighted room which he had ordered his assistants to keep in utter darkness.

And the instant he appeared inside the room, directly in front of the chief, his right hand shot forward, followed by a sharp report, and then he leaped forward with all his might upon some object before him.

He had arrived there just in time to save the lives of Patsy and Ten-Ichi.

As he stepped from behind the wardrobe, the spectacle which met his eyes was this:

Patsy was stretched limp and unconscious, seemingly dead, in fact, upon the floor against the further wall of the room. Ten-Ichi was upon his back in the middle of the floor where the center table had been overturned, and Dr. Quartz was bending over him with his left hand at Ten-Ichi's throat, and his right raised high in the air; and in that right hand there gleamed a deadly looking knife which was already in the act of descending.

Both of Ten-Ichi's hands were at the doctor's throat, and the doctor's tongue was already beginning to protrude from his open mouth, and his eyes were the eyes of a man who is choking slowly but surely, thus showing evidence of Ten-Ichi's strength and fighting qualities, and that his Japanese training had taught him

how to resist the pressure of the doctor's fingers upon his own throat.

Without the knife in the doctor's hand, Ten-Ichi must surely have come off a victor in that fight; but from the overturned table it had fallen to the floor within reach of the doctor's hand, and he had seized it.

The knife was on the downward course when Nick Carter leaped into the room, and it was only by one of those wonderful snapshots for which the detective was and will always be famous, that Ten-Ichi's life was saved.

The descent of the knife was not stayed by the shot, but when it fell against the bosom of the young assistant, the murderous blade was no longer there, for the detective's bullet had broken it short off at the hilt, and it was only a blunt cross bar which struck Ten-Ichi on the breast.

And Ten-Ichi was still full of fight.

When the report of Nick's pistol filled the room; when the hilt of the weapon struck him on the breast; when Nick sprang into the room and hurled himself upon the doctor, still Ten-Ichi did not relinquish his hold upon the physician's throat.

He hung on, silent, grim, relentless, determined.

And the doctor, with his eyes and tongue protruding, and with the breath almost gone from his body, was still full of fight also; still as strong as an ox; still as relentless as fate.

But Nick Carter did not propose to mince matters. Things had gone too far for that.

He raised his fist and struck the doctor a terrible blow behind the ear; and Quartz wilted under it as if he had been hit with an ax.

Ten-Ichi released his hold then, and leaped to his feet, little the worse for his combat; and Nick, well satisfied to leave Quartz in the hands of him and the chief, sprang to the side of Patsy.

But Patsy was already coming around.

His eyes were blinking, and he was beginning to wonder what had happened when he saw his master's eyes looking into his own.

"He hit me on the point of the chin, I reckon," sai Patsy, weakly. "Guess I've been taking a nap. Ge whizz, but he's a terror!"

Nick smiled at Patsy's quaintness.

"Pull yourself together, lad," he said. "There water in the bath room."

Then he returned to the others.

But the chief had already taken measures to secur Quartz, and was fast mummifying him with pictu wires torn from the walls. That is, he was windin them round and round the legs, and body, and arms the doctor, and fast rendering him in such a conditio that he would not be able to move a muscle when h recovered consciousness.

"Nick," he said, when he had finished the job, " you were to point out a pile of a hundred thousand do lars in gold, and ask me which I'd take, by thunde I'd take Quartz!"

"I don't blame you," replied Nick. "But now, you don't mind, we'll leave the good doctor here charge of my lads. They will keep him safe enou now; and we have some other fish to fry downstair Our friend Crystal may be getting impatient, a Chick should show up presently. You can arrest Cry tal as soon as you like, now. Come along."

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERIES SOLVED.

The detective, followed by the chief, found that th were still awaited with becoming patience in the priva office of the hotel.

It had been arranged between them, while they we descending the stairs, how the arrest of Dr. Crys would be accomplished, and as soon as they entered t room, the program was carried out.

rystal and the coroner were seated side by side, en-
ed in a friendly discussion of some abstruse medical
ory when they entered, and Nick passed at once
ound the room so that his course would take him
ectly behind the two men.

The chief, in the meanwhile, passed in front of them,
d at the instant when they were directly opposite
h other—that is, when Crystal was exactly between
m—Nick acted.

He merely leaned forward, and seized the doctor by
arms, thus pinning him to the chair in which he
s seated.

At the same moment the chief advanced a step in
ler to be in readiness, should the doctor attempt to
ke a fight for it.

But very much to the surprise of both men, he did
t.

"You are my prisoner, Dr. Crystal," said the chief,
en Nick seized the man; and the doctor merely raised
eyes and replied:

"Indeed? You surprise me, chief."

If he was in the least surprised, he gave no evidence
it. His face remained as masked and as glacial as
r, as if it were adorned with some of that same
paration of enamel which Nick had described so
phically in the room of death.

"I arrest you," said the chief, glibly, "as an acces-
y before, during and after the fact of the murders
the three unidentified corpses now in this hotel."

And then, still without a word or a movement of ob-
tion from Crystal, he proceeded to double handcuff
n, bringing this operation to an end by making use
a third pair of irons, one of which he fastened to
doctor's wrist, and the other to his own.

"We won't part company, doctor, until we are inside
police headquarters," he said, grimly.

Dr. Crystal merely shrugged his shoulders, as if the
ole proceeding were an insufferable bore which had
to be endured, much as he disliked it—and contented
himself with absolute silence after that.

But if he evinced no surprise at the incident, the others in the room were not as self-contained.

"Coroner," said Nick, speaking then, "if you will permit me to make a suggestion, I should advise that you have the bodies upstairs taken directly to the morgue. An undertaker is not necessary in the case of any of them, since they have already been thoroughly prepared for burial. It is another case of embalming, coroner, like that of the freight car, only this one is much better done than the other."

"I am astonished!" exclaimed the coroner; and Nick smiled.

"I think all of the medical fraternity will be equally so, sir," he said, "so give yourself no uneasiness lest you have not done your full duty and seen as far into this case as any other professional man might have done. The fact is, that these bodies have been corpses for a week or more—I have no idea how long. All three of them were murdered in the rooms of Dr. Crystal. They were embalmed at once, by that mysterious process which is so perfect, and which is known only to Dr. Quartz and his pupil, Crystal."

A slight shrug of Crystal's shoulders was the only indication that he heard a word.

"I have thoroughly searched Crystal's rooms," continued Nick, "and I find there a great many things which will interest you, as a man of medicine and science, and if, when the time for the inquest arrives, you will select your jury from your own profession, I have no doubt that they will be glad to serve, and that also they will learn considerable that they never knew before."

"Thank you," said the coroner. "And now, about that inquest. Shall we hold it at once?"

"I think," replied Nick, "that I should postpone it at least a week. The bodies will keep in their present

condition a thousand years for all I know—certainly long enough for you to take your time in the matter; and in the meantime the chief, here, will facilitate all your preliminary inquiries, by giving you free access to the rooms of Dr. Crystal. There are two important witnesses whom I wish present at the inquest, and my assistant, Chickering, will have produced them within a week, I am certain."

Again Crystal shrugged his shoulders, but made no remark.

* * * * * * *

Five days elapsed before the detectives succeeded in locating the bride and groom who applied that fatal night, at The Great hotel, for the bridal chamber, and they still had the bell boy of the hotel with them, fearing, as they confessed, that if he returned to the hotel, the demon doctor would again get on their track, and would ultimately carry out his threats against them.

And then came the inquest, which was held, at the suggestion of Nick Carter, in a room at police headquarters itself.

The groom of that eventful night was named Albert Peyton, and his testimony, stripped of unnecessary phrase, was as follows:

"I first made the acquaintance of Dr. Quartz while traveling in Europe, seven years ago. I was charmed by the man, and thought, as I still believe, that he was and is the most profoundly learned man who lives.

"I became his constant companion and friend, but it was not long before I discovered that he was experimenting upon me in his inscrutable way, and until that moment, without my knowledge.

"My first impression that such was the case came from a sudden fondness which I developed for frequenting the morgue in Paris. I found that almost every day, in spite of my determination not to go there, my footsteps would inevitably tend toward the morgue, and, before I was aware of it, sometimes, I would f myself looking down upon the mutilated dead faces the conglomerate mass of perished humanity which gathered to that awful place.

"More than that, I seemed to enjoy the horri sights I saw there.

"I thought I was becoming insane, and strove w all my might to combat the force which drew me the never dreaming that Dr. Quartz was the cause, u one day I saw his smiling and unctuous face peer at me from the opposite side of the room.

"I knew then.

"I returned to the hotel where we were stopping, having fortified myself with stimulant, I confronted doctor in his room and charged him with attempti some of his hellish practices upon me, who was best friend—at least, so he said.

"He had the effrontery to admit it, giving as excuse, that he needed an assistant who would pr as unscrupulous in the pursuit of knowledge as was, and that he had selected me as physically a mentally fit for the office. A compliment, I suppo although I did not accept it as such.

"I am physically a powerful man. I attacked doctor. We fought for some time, and what mig have been the final outcome of that combat I do know, for we were interrupted by the Paris pol whom the hotel proprietor had called in.

"We were taken to the city prison there, and pla in adjoining cells. Ultimately we were both releas But while we occupied adjoining cells, Dr. Quartz an opportunity to tell me of the revenge he propo to take upon me.

"Dr. Quartz was at that time—or, at least, pretend to be—in love with my sister, Edith. You will reme ber that she was found unconscious in his house at time of his first arrest in this city, and that she never since recovered her right mind.*

*See two preceding numbers NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

ind course, I warned Edith against him, and, of
s of, she would have nothing more to do with him,
hough I think she was still fascinated by his ad-
sses and has never escaped from that fascination.
wever, I brought her back to America with me.

'I was at that time in love with the woman who is
y my wife. Her name was Minerva Galena. She
l two sisters, one older and one younger than herself.
e first was named Zanoni, and you all know who she
The other was named Thora, and the bodies of the
o women found in The Great hotel are those of
ora Galena and her maid, Constance. The identity
the man I cannot give you, but I believe him to be
rely a haphazard victim of the necessities of Dr.
artz for carrying out his threats against me.

'And now as to those threats, which will explain of
mselves many of the mysteries of this astounding
e.

'Quartz has always been a libertine. He boasted,
ing his threats, that he had already married a dozen
men, experimented with them, and finally killed
m only to select another to take their places. I told
s to the authorities of Paris, but they laughed at me.

'Quartz had seen my prospective wife many times;
o her sisters. I had taken him to call, and he was
requent visitor. I did not know then that he had
eady gained an ascendency over Zanoni; but I know
v that he did so from the beginning. And I think
has had reason to regret it sometimes, for she proved
apt a pupil, and now is so skilled that she defies
n. She is really the only person on earth he fears.

'He told me, while we were in prison together, that
would hound me until he drove me utterly mad. I
nember his words. They were:

"'I will drive you mad with terror, and afterward I will perform my favorite operation of vivisection upon your living body, for I can keep you alive and conscious while you look upon your own body hung up piece by piece upon the wall before your eyes. I will change Zanoni and Thora Galena into fiends incarnate, to hound you and their sister into madness. Zanoni is already in my power, and is a splendid pupil; I think I will spare her till the last, but Thora I will marry, and when she has served my purposes for scientific researches, I will send her dead body to her sister, Minerva. I will prevent your marriage with Minerva. You shall never wed her, and yet I will keep her sufficiently near you, and sufficiently out of my influence, so that she will always claim your protection and your love. Through her I will drive you mad, and I can best do that by keeping you both untouched, but under the menace of a constant terrible danger.'

"That is, in part, what he said, but it is sufficient to explain the things he has done to carry out his awful threats.

"The Duclos family, murdered in total almost—I am told that only Nanine is now alive and that she as well as my sister, Edith, has completely lost her mind—that family were kindred to the Galena family.

"During the seven years which have elapsed since he uttered those threats, Minerva and I have seven times attempted to be married, and we only succeeded at the seventh trial, which was the evening of that awful night at The Great hotel; and during those attempts, we have traveled all over the world, Minerva accompanied by her maiden aunt of her father's name, and under assumed names any many disguises; I, under disguise, always keeping near her; and it was always death in some form which stepped between us. Twice, the minister, and once, a justice who was to perform

the ceremony, has been stricken down dead before our eyes when he undertook the ceremony, killed by some deft poison of the doctor's. Once an explosion wrecked the church in Florence, where we were to be married, and many were killed. Once, the sixth time, the dead body of Minerva's aunt interposed, found by her when she was arranging her toilet for the ceremony.

"We fled from place to place, and finally to this city, when we decided to run no further, convinced, as we were, that we could not escape him.

"And here, gentlemen, we have suffered tortures.

"That awful freight car, which contained almost all the living relatives of my wife, was sent here as a warning to us, and to carry out his threat against me, made in the prison in Paris.

"Minerva and I dreaded to see each other, lest the contact should be the death of some innocent man or woman.

"But at last we fixed upon a day—secretly, as we supposed—determined to brave the worst; and that was the night when after the ceremony, convinced that we had foiled him at last since he was in prison, we applied at The Great hotel.

"You know what sight we encountered there, and how it affected us. But we were married at last, and we fled. You see how his threatening hand could reach out to us even while he was in prison.

"Don't ask me how he knew we were to be married that night, or how he discovered that we intended to apply at The Great hotel after the ceremony, for I cannot tell you. I only know that neither of us had ever breathed our intentions to others save ourselves. But you know that he did know our secret thoughts, for you know of the reception that was prepared for us at the hotel. Zanoni, with her wizard ways, might have discovered some means of ascertaining about all; I do not know."

* * * * * * *

Police investigation into the cause of the riot, di closed the following facts:

That Dr. Quartz, through his following, which w something stupendous, had fully arranged for such riot to occur the next time he was imprisoned, a that he had paid large sums of money to have it ca ried out. The selection of Stone's Museum for t place, was merely one of the doctor's conceits, ina much as attention had been called to him throu the mysterious freight car which was still on exhib tion there. How well the scheme worked, we alrea know.

* * * * * * *

And now a word more as to several of the characte of this tragedy.

When Dr. Crystal was placed on the stand at the i quest, his reply to every question asked of him, was shrug of the shoulders, and silence. Nothing cou draw a word from him, nor change the expressionl face he showed there.

And Zanoni? She had disappeared utterly.

Dr. Quartz himself?

"Mr. Coroner," he said, blandly, on that occasio "I advise you not to ask questions of me, for I shall n tell you the truth if you do."

"Where is Zanoni?" was asked of him, in spite what he said; and he replied:

"In heaven, I trust."

THE END.

Next week's issue of the NICK CARTER WEEKL 416, will contain "Zanoni, the Woman Wizard; The Ward of Dr. Quartz." In this you will read o woman with the face of an angel—the soul of a dev

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